

**Sapper Richard Henry Cocke**  
**Regimental number: 134171**  
**9th Field Company, Royal Engineers**

**born: 1892 - died: 1 July 1918**

Sapper Richard Henry Cocke was the son of Walter and Lydia Cocke of Bishops Stortford, Hertfordshire.<sup>1</sup> His father, Walter Thomas, was born in 1849 in Bishops Stortford<sup>2</sup> and his mother, the former Lydia Mullen, was born in 1850 in East Norton, Leicestershire.<sup>3</sup> Walter and Lydia married at Holy Trinity Church in Gray's Inn Road, London on 10 April 1877.<sup>4</sup> Richard was the youngest of their eight children that included five sons and three daughters. The children were Walter Thomas (born in about 1877),<sup>5</sup> George Charles (born in about 1878),<sup>6</sup> Lillian Mary (born in about 1880 and probably died the same year as Lydia Mary),<sup>7</sup> Hubert Mullen (born in about 1882),<sup>8</sup> Daisy Lydia (born in about 1884),<sup>9</sup> Violet Annie (born in about 1887),<sup>10</sup> Robert William (born in about 1889)<sup>11</sup> and Richard Henry (born in 1892).<sup>12</sup>

In 1901, the family was living on Nursery Road in Bishops Stortford where Richard's father was a carpenter.<sup>13</sup> He died in 1902 and, in 1911, his mother was living with six of her children, still at 10 Nursery Road, Bishops Stortford.<sup>14</sup> Richard, then aged 19, was working as a plumber.

Richard enlisted as a Sapper with the 9th Field Company of the Royal Engineers. The Company served with 4th Division at the outbreak of the war but did not immediately join the original British Expeditionary Force in France.<sup>15</sup> The Company stayed in England to defend against a possible German landing. When this did not appear to be imminent, the Company joined the BEF in August 1914. The Company took part in most major engagements on the Western Front throughout the war. It was demobilised when the 4th Division was demobilised in Belgium in early 1919.

It is not known when Richard enlisted, but he did not see the end of the war. He was admitted to the 1st Canadian Casualty Clearing Station on 18 June 1918 with shell wounds to his chest and back. He survived for nearly two weeks, dying only on 1 July. He was buried the following day in Pernes British Military Cemetery (Plot 5, Row D, Grave No. 13) with the chaplain, J. K. Tibbitts presiding. Richard was identified as a member of the Church of England.

When Richard was admitted to the 1st CCCS, he was one of 276 admissions that day and one of 39 to die at the unit in July.<sup>16</sup> Most of the over 1,000 First World War soldiers buried in the Pernes British Military Cemetery died at one of the nearby clearing stations.<sup>17</sup> This cemetery was only set up in April 1918 when the 1st and 4th Canadian Casualty Clearing Stations came to Pernes, driven back by the German advance.

His mother was notified of his death and she received the monies owing to her by the army after the war.<sup>18</sup> Richard was awarded the British War Medal (for service overseas between 1914 and 1918) and the Victory Medal (for service in an operational theatre).<sup>19</sup>

Richard's brother, George Charles, also served in the Great War.<sup>20</sup> In 1905, George married in Bishops Stortford<sup>21</sup> and, in 1911, was living with his wife and their son, Bernard (born in 1906) in Bishops Stortford.<sup>22</sup> Then, at some point, George and his family immigrated to Canada. At the beginning of the war, his wife, Elisabeth, was living at 261 King Street, Kingston, Ontario. George was a machinist and had previously served for twelve years in the Imperial Army, Highland Light Infantry when he enlisted in the 21st Battalion of the Canadian Expeditionary Force on 11

November 1914. He was awarded the Croix de Guerre by H.M. King of the Belgians in July 1918. At the end of the war, his wife was living at 10 Nursery Road in Bishops Stortford, presumably with George's mother. George survived the war, returned to England in early April 1919 and was discharged from the Canadian army in England later that month. There is no evidence to suggest that George and his family returned to Canada after the war.

There is also no evidence to indicate whether or not Richard's other brothers served in the Great War.

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<sup>1</sup> "Commonwealth War Graves Commission," ([www.cwgc.org](http://www.cwgc.org); accessed 3 December 2015), entry for Cocke, Richard Henry

<sup>2</sup> "England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk); accessed 20 April 2015), entry for Walter Thomas Cocke, Registration district: Bishop's Stortford, Inferred County: Hertfordshire, Volume: 6, Page: 547

<sup>3</sup> "England, Select Births and Christenings, 1538-1975," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk); accessed 20 April 2015), entry for Lydia Mullen, FHL Film Number: 592588

<sup>4</sup> "London, England, Marriages and Banns, 1754-1921," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk); accessed 20 April 2015), entry for Walter Thomas Cocke, Parish: Gray's Inn Road Holy Trinity, Borough: Camden, Register Type: Parish Register

<sup>5</sup> "England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk); accessed 20 April 2015), entry for Walter Thomas Cocke, Registration district: Bishop's Stortford, Inferred County: Hertfordshire, Volume: 3a, Page: 305

<sup>6</sup> "England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk); accessed 20 April 2015), entry for George Charles Cocke, Registration district: Bishop's Stortford, Inferred County: Hertfordshire, Volume: 3a, Page: 329

<sup>7</sup> "England, Select Births and Christenings, 1538-1975," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk); accessed 20 April 2015), entry for Lillian Mary Cocke, FHL Film Number: 1537868, Reference ID: item 4 p 2; "England & Wales, FreeBMD Death Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk); accessed 21 January 2015), entry for Lydia Mary Cocke, Registration district: Bishop's Stortford, Inferred County: Hertfordshire, Volume: 3a, Page: 216

<sup>8</sup> "England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk); accessed 20 April 2015), entry for Hubert Mullen Cocke, Registration district: Bishop's Stortford, Inferred County: Hertfordshire, Volume: 3a, Page: 398

<sup>9</sup> "England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk); accessed 20 April 2015), entry for Daisy Lydia Cocke, Registration district: Bishop's Stortford, Inferred County: Hertfordshire, Volume: 3a, Page: 432

<sup>10</sup> "England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk); accessed 20 April 2015), entry for Violet Annie Cocke, Registration district: Bishop's Stortford, Inferred County: Hertfordshire, Volume: 3a, Page: 449

<sup>11</sup> "England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk); accessed 20 April 2015), entry for Robert William Cocke, Registration district: Bishop's Stortford, Inferred County: Hertfordshire, Volume: 3a, Page: 472

<sup>12</sup> "England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk); accessed 20 April 2015), entry for Richard Henry Cocke, Registration district: Bishop's Stortford, Inferred County: Hertfordshire, Volume: 3a, Page: 496

<sup>13</sup> "1901 England Census," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk); accessed 20 April 2015), entry for Richard Cocke, Registration district: Bishop Stortford, Sub-registration district: Bishop Stortford, ED, institution, or vessel: 4, Piece: 1289, Folio: 82, Page Number: 52, Household schedule number: 366

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<sup>14</sup> "1911 England Census," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk); accessed 20 April 2015), entry for Richard Henery Cokes, Registration district: Bishops Stortford, Registration District Number: 134, Sub-registration district: Stortford, ED, institution, or vessel: 4, Household schedule number: 173, Piece: 7495

<sup>15</sup> "9th Field Company, The Royal Engineers," The Wartime Memories Project - The Great War (<http://www.wartimememoriesproject.com/greatwar/allied/royalengineers9fldcoy-gw.php>; accessed 21 April 2015)

<sup>16</sup> "War Diaries of the First World War: 1st Canadian Casualty Clearing Station 1914/08/13-1919/03/31," *Library and Archives Canada* ([http://data4.collectionscanada.gc.ca/netacgi/nph-brs?s1=casualty+clearing&s13=&s12=&l=20&s9=RG9&s7=9-52&Sect1=IMAGE&Sect2=THESOFF&Sect4=AND&Sect5=WARDPEN&Sect6=HITOFF&d=FINDD&p=1&u=http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/archivianet/02015202\\_e.html&r=1&f=G](http://data4.collectionscanada.gc.ca/netacgi/nph-brs?s1=casualty+clearing&s13=&s12=&l=20&s9=RG9&s7=9-52&Sect1=IMAGE&Sect2=THESOFF&Sect4=AND&Sect5=WARDPEN&Sect6=HITOFF&d=FINDD&p=1&u=http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/archivianet/02015202_e.html&r=1&f=G))

<sup>17</sup> "Pernes British Military Cemetery" *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* (<http://www.cwgc.org/find-a-cemetery/cemetery/11600/PERNES%20BRITISH%20CEMETERY>; accessed 13 January 2015)

<sup>18</sup> "UK, Army Registers of Soldiers' Effects, 1901-1929," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk); accessed 21 April 2015), entry for Richard Henry Cocks

<sup>19</sup> "British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914-1920," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk); accessed 26 November 2015), entry for Cocks, Richard

<sup>20</sup> "Service Files of the First World War, 1914-1918 - CEF," *Library and Archives Canada* (<http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/military-heritage/first-world-war/first-world-war-1914-1918-cef/Pages/search.aspx>; accessed 21 April 2015) entry for George Charles Cocks, Reference: RG 150, Accession 1992-93/166, Box 1830 - 12

<sup>21</sup> "England & Wales marriages 1837-2008," *Findmypast* ([www.findmypast.co.uk](http://www.findmypast.co.uk); accessed 21 April 2015), entry for George Charles Cocks, District: Bishops Stortford, County: Hertfordshire, Volume: 3A, Page: 265

<sup>22</sup> "1911 England Census," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk); accessed 21 April 2015), entry for George Cocks, Registration district: Bishops Stortford, Registration District Number: 134, Sub-registration district: Stortford, ED, institution, or vessel: 2, Household schedule number: 39, Piece: 7493